United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Washington, D.C. 20240
http://www.blm.gov

Dear Reader:

Enclosed is the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) on Wind Energy Development on Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-Administered Lands in the Western United States, including proposed amendments to selected land use plans. The Final PEIS analyzes three alternatives for managing wind energy development on BLM-administered lands. The alternatives are: 1) the proposed action, which would implement a Wind Energy Development Program, establish policies and best management practices (BMPs) for wind energy right-of-way (ROW) authorizations, and amend 52 BLM land use plans; 2) the no action alternative, which would allow continued wind energy development under the terms and conditions of the BLM Interim Wind Energy Development Policy, and 3) a limited wind energy development alternative, which would allow wind energy development only in selected locations.

As stated above, the proposed action would establish a comprehensive program to address wind energy development on BLM-administered lands. The policies and BMPs developed under the proposed Wind Energy Development Program would establish minimum requirements for management of individual wind energy projects. The proposed policies identify management objectives and address the administration of wind energy development activities. The proposed BMPs identify required mitigation measures that would need to be incorporated into project-specific plans and stipulations. In addition, the proposed action would amend 52 BLM land use plans which are listed in Appendix C of the Final PEIS. The proposed plan amendments include the (1) adoption of programmatic policies and BMPs where wind energy development would be considered and (2) identification of specific areas where wind energy development would not be allowed. The purpose of the proposed plan amendments is to facilitate preparation and consideration of potential wind energy development ROW applications on BLM-administered lands, but not to eliminate the need for site-specific analysis of individual development proposals.

The Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Wind Energy Development on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States was made available for public review and comment from September 10, 2004 to December 10, 2004. The Draft PEIS was posted on the project Web site at http://windeis.anl.gov and provided on request as a CD or printed document. More than 120 individuals and organizations participated in the public comment process, including more than 60 recognized organizations (public and private). About 77% of the documents were received via the project Web-site and 23% were received via regular mail. On the basis of comment categorization, approximately 718 individual comments were identified.

Volume 3 of the Final PEIS contains the public comments on the Draft PEIS and the BLM's responses. Public comments addressed a broad range of issues. About 31% of the comments were categorized as addressing ecological issues, including monitoring and mitigation; 21% addressed policy issues; 17% addressed avian issues, 10% addressed bat issues; 8% addressed issues related to the scope of the PEIS and the alternatives evaluated; 6% addressed sage-grouse issues; 6% addressed transmission issues; and 4% of the comments addressed land use issues. The remainder of the issues were divided across a number of topics (each comprising less than 3% of the total), including engineering, cumulative impacts, cultural resources, economics, visual impacts, wind resource modeling approach, noise, regulatory issues, water, waste, air quality, geology, and transportation issues. (The percentages total more than 100% because many of the comments can be categorized under more than one key issue). Public comments on the Draft PEIS, including the proposed plan amendments, and internal BLM review comments were incorporated into the Final PEIS. Public comments resulted in the addition of clarifying text, but did not significantly change the proposed action or proposed land use plan amendments.

Copies of the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Wind Energy Development on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States, including the proposed plan amendments (Appendix C), have been sent to the Environmental Protection Agency, DOI Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, DOI Library, and the governors' office in each of the 11 western states. Copies of the Final PEIS, including the proposed plan amendments, are available at the BLM State Offices in the 11 western states and the BLM Washington Office, Public Affairs Office. Interested persons may also review the Final PEIS and proposed plan amendments on the Internet at http://windeis.anl.gov.

Instructions for filing a protest regarding the proposed plan amendments may be found at 43 CFR 1610.5. A protest may only raise those issues which were submitted for the record during the NEPA/planning process. E-mail and faxed protests will not be accepted as valid protests unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular or overnight mail postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the e-mail or faxed protest will be considered as an advance copy and it will receive full consideration. If you wish to provide such advance notification, please direct faxed protests to the attention of the BLM protest coordinator at 202-452-5112, and emails to Brenda_Hudgens-Williams@blm.gov.

Please direct the follow-up letter to the appropriate address provided below.

The protest must contain:

a. The name, mailing address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest.
b. A statement of the specific plan(s) by name and the amendment(s) being protested.
c. A copy of all documents addressing the issue(s) that the protesting party submitted during the NEPA/planning process or a statement of the date they were discussed for the record.
d. A concise statement explaining why the protestor believes the proposed land use plan amendment(s) is wrong.

All protests must be in writing and mailed to the following address:

Regular Mail:	Overnight Mail:
Bureau of Land Management	Bureau of Land Management
Director (210)	Director (210)
Attention: Brenda Williams	Attention: Brenda Williams
P.O. Box 66538	1620 L Street, N.W., Suite 1075
Washington, D.C. 20035	Washington, D.C. 20036

Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

A decision shall be rendered promptly on the protest. The decision will be in writing and will be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested.

Following the resolution of any protests and completion of the consistency reviews by the governors of states affected by land use plan amendments, approval of the Program for Wind Energy Development on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States and amendment of selected land use plans will be documented in a Record of Decision that will be made available to the public and provided on request to interested parties. For additional information, you may contact Lee Otteni, Bureau of Land Management, Farmington Field Office, 1235 La Plata Highway, Suite A, Farmington, NM 87401, (505) 599-8911 or visit the Wind Energy Development Programmatic EIS Web site at windeis.anl.gov.

Sincerely,

Ray Brady
Group Manager, Lands and Realty